

# Realigning rhythms to better meet student data needs

BY CHRISTOPHER M. THE

*A year of listening to the needs of member school administrators, students, and other stakeholders is reflected in the newly released 2023–24 Q's Calendar, supporting ATS Student Data and Resources. This article provides guidance on when and how to use the two most popular student data instruments—available at no cost to ATS member schools through a current Lilly Endowment-funded ATS initiative—and will prepare schools participating in the ATS Student Questionnaires (“the Qs”) to meet new deadlines and be familiar with realigned reporting routines for the upcoming academic year.*



## **Which instrument to use—and when?**

Do you know why your students are choosing to attend your theological school? How about their current plans for when they finish? The Entering Student Questionnaire (ESQ) can help your institution learn about the newest members of its student body. We recommend that the ESQ for the fall term be administered in August and September—consider incorporating it into your school's new student orientation process, as an assignment embedded in an introductory course, or deploy it in the interim between acceptance and matriculation.

For member schools wanting earlier access to the ESQ ahead of the new student rush this fall, you can now access the instrument as early as the beginning of June by completing the Qs Order Form a month or two ahead

of time. In other words, *now* is not too early to plan for fall 2023 use of the ESQ. Save the date for the upcoming ESQ webinar on November 15, when we will explore what we are learning about students newly enrolled in fall 2023.

The Graduating Student Questionnaire (GSQ) can be administered through July and may best be deployed as part of an exit interview, capstone, or similar commencement-adjacent process. There is much you can learn from your rising graduates regarding the educational programs your school offers—how they perceived your school's strengths and its growth areas, elements of campus climate, student formational outcomes, and (multi)vocational realities.

To accommodate member schools that collect such information during the summer, the 2023–24 Q's Calendar clarifies that the full year of GSQ student data will be due in mid-August of that academic year. Need your data sooner? Schools are welcome to submit their verified batches earlier and allow three to four weeks for ATS to distribute data reports on a rolling basis.

Save the date for the upcoming GSQ webinar on September 20, 2023, which will focus on 2022–23 graduates. Next year's GSQ webinar, reflecting 2023–24 graduates, will be around the same time (September 18, 2024).

Unchanged is the annual security process to reset administrator accounts, with new passwords to be assigned across the board in August.

### **An emerging community of student data-related practice**

Next year's adjustments to the rhythms of the ESQ and GSQ invite renewal for the community of practice gathering around student data. We invite you to post questions, insights, and learnings via the "ATS Student Questionnaires" community on Engage ATS anytime—especially before and after the upcoming ESQ and GSQ webinars. Showcasing the Total School Profile reports of student data submitted by participating member schools, these webinars reflect the height of when ATS members, affiliates, and others from the general public gather to learn about membership-wide trends in ATS student-volunteered information.

Whatever methodology your school elects to use, a little preparation goes a long way. Being better prepared gives your school more options to pivot with greater agility, particularly as you center your data collection and analysis practices around the student experience. Throughout the year, ATS Student Data and Resources staff will offer virtual information sessions, periodic research reports, and on-demand training materials to help your institution achieve its student data-informed goals.

We invite you to explore the numerous resources we have gathered to support your using the Qs, and we hope you find the newly revised rhythms to be more responsive to your needs. Visit the ATS website for more information on the Qs.



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## Timeline for the ATS Student Questionnaires

